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ABSTRACT

Social studies educators frequently receive publicity about programs of academic travel abroad. The sponsoring organizations and institutions claim that these programs will improve foreign language ability, create greater international understanding, and help students grow personally. The question is whether or not these claims are supported by conclusive research and how educators can make well-informed, intelligent decisions about which programs to use. This study, organized into four sections, reviews the research of experts in the field of academic travel abroad and provides educators with the knowledge and tools necessary to select or to create an effective academic travel abroad program for their students. The first section reviews recent research assessing the value of academic travel abroad. The second lists existing programs available to high school students. The third section provides examples of individual schools that chose to develop their own programs which can be used as models for educators. The final section considers important concerns and responsibilities of the teacher or administrator making a decision about academic travel abroad. (APG)

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ACADEMIC TRAVEL ABROAD FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS: MAKING AN INTELLIGENT CHOICE

BY

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

of S591: Exit Project

Indiana University at South Bend

December, 1986

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BACKGROUND

NAME: Lois Converse Buss

EDUCATION: Indiana University at South Bend

B. A., 1979

EXPERIENCE: Teacher of high school French

Tippecanoe Valley School Corporation

Mentone, Indiana

RATIONALE: As a foreign language teacher, I have become very interested in the prospect of academic travel abroad. I had conducted a preliminary investigation of the topic for a much briefer work in another graduate education course which served to increase this interest. I feel that a well-chosen academic travel abroad experience can produce benefits that are perhaps immeasurable, but also invaluable, for our students. I am sure I will use the information acquired in conducting the present study to sponsor such a venture with my own students in the near future and sincerely hope that it may benefit other educators in the same way.

"I am convinced that one of the best ways to develop more accurate perspectives on other nations and on ourselves is for more Americans to join, for a time, a family and community in another land."

"And we cannot hope that other nations will appreciate our country unless more of their future leaders have had the same chance to feel the warmth of the American Family, the vitality of the American community, and the diversity of our educational system."

"There is a flickering spark in all of us which, if struck at just the right age, can light the rest of our lives, elevating our ideals, deepening our tolerance, and sharpening our appetite for knowledge about the rest of the world."

"Education and cultural exchanges, especially among our young, provide a perfect opportunity for this precious spark to grow, making us more sensitive and wiser international citizens."

President Ronald Reagan

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION:

Statement of Problem 2

Statement of Purpose 3

Organization of Study. 4

Limitations of Study 5

Definition of Terms. 6

ANNOTATIONS:

Assessing the Value of Academic Travel Abroad. 7

Choosing an Existing Program 12

Specific Programs 12

Reference Works 16

Developing a New Program 18

Considering Specific Sponsor Responsibilities. 19

SUMMARY 22

CONCLUSIONS 26

RECOMMENDATIONS 29

BIBLIOGRAPHY. 30

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Educators in the fields of foreign language and social studies instruction are constantly bombarded with publicity on programs of academic travel abroad. These organizations and institutions claim that the programs will improve foreign language ability, create greater international understanding, and help students to grow personally. The question is whether or not these claims are supported by conclusive research and how the educator can make a well-informed, intelligent decision about which programs to use.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Making a responsible decision about academic travel abroad requires many considerations. Educators too often blindly accept the decision of an organization, institution, or school board in this important matter. The purpose of this study was to review the research of experts in the field of academic travel abroad and to provide educators with the knowledge and tools necessary to select or to create an effective academic travel abroad program for their students.

ORGANIZATION OF STUDY

This study is organized into four major sections. The first section is a review of recent research assessing the value of academic travel abroad. The second is a listing of existing academic travel abroad programs available to high school students. Programs noted with an asterisk are those evaluated and sanctioned by the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel for the academic year 1986-87. The third section provides examples of individual schools that chose to develop their own programs and were presented as models for the educator considering this alternative. The final section of this study considers important concerns or responsibilities of the teacher or administrator making a decision about academic travel abroad.

Annotations were organized in each section of this study according to publication date, beginning with the most recent. In the instance of concurrent publication dates, annotations were arranged alphabetically by the author's last name. In section two, the listings of specific programs were arranged alphabetically by the full name of the sponsoring organization.

LIMITATIONS

There were two major limitations in this study. The first was the time period of one academic semester to accomplish it. Several journal articles and ERIC documents were requested for inclusion, but did not arrive in time. Thus, the information included in this study is a representative sample of the literature available.

Secondly, there was the limitation of availability of certain publications. Since much of the information was acquired by direct correspondence with individual organizations or institutions, acquiring the information depended on obtaining accurate addresses and the speed and accuracy of the United States postal service.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

academic travel abroad - Travel outside one's country by students or staff of schools or universities when undertaken primarily in pursuit of activities of an educational or research nature rather than a commercial or recreational nature (Good, 624).

CIEE - An acronym for the Council on International Educational Exchange.

culture shock - Any notable change in affect, thinking or behavior which can be attributed to exposure to an unfamiliar environment and/or separation from a familiar one (Locke, 816).

IIE - An acronym for the Institute of International Education.

long-term - Any program of academic travel abroad lasting for a period of one academic year or longer (Council on Standards for International Educational Travel, 13-75).

NAFSA - An acronym for the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs.

NCSS - An acronym for the National Council for the Social Studies.

short-term - Any program of academic travel abroad lasting less than one academic year (Council on Standards for International Educational Travel, 13-75).

ASSESSING THE VALUE OF ACADEMIC TRAVEL ABROAD

Burn, Barbara M. "Research in Progress: Does Study Abroad Make a Difference?" Change 17 (March, April 1985): 48-49.

Burn discussed a long-term evaluation of academic travel abroad begun in 1982 by the European Institute of Education and the European Economic Community. She stated that this evaluation, entitled Student Abroad Evaluation Project (SAP), is investigating both programs within initial findings from questionnaires completed before study abroad revealing the characteristics of SAP students. These students were found to be more independent, more ambitious, and more demanding. Although they were more concerned about international affairs, they were not better informed.

Koester, Jolene. A Profile of the U.S. Student Aboad. Council on International Educational Exchange. New York, 1985. ED 265 737.

Koester prefaced her own study with a comprehensive review of research on academic travel abroad. The data for this study were gathered from a questionnaire attached to applications for the International Student Identity Card. Koester provided profiles of the following students: 1.) who participated in a program sponsored by a U.S. educational institution 2.) who enrolled directly in a foreign institution 3.) who studied independently 4.) who worked for pay and 5.) who traveled educationally. Koester concluded with observations on the relationship between language and academic travel abroad.

Sell, Deborah K. "Research on Attitude Change in U.S. Students Who Participate in Foreign Study Experiences: Past Findings and Suggestions for Future Research." International Journal of Intercultural Relations 7.2 (1983): 131-148.

This article provided a thorough review of the literature to date. Sell summarized the studies of the following researchers: Garraty and Adams (1959), Churchill (1958), Burnham (1966), Abrams (1979), Smith (1955), McGuigan (1958), Leonard (1964), Kafka (1969), Hofman (1969), Herman (1970), Pfnister (1972), Marion (1976), Salter and Teger (1975), Nash (1975), and Hensley (1978). Sell then suggested that future research be undertaken to determine the variables that produce attitude change. She recommended the sue of subgroup analysis to more accurately measure change. Sell suggested that behavioral changes be measured as well.

Smith, Alan. "International Communication through Study Abroad: Some Priorities and Pitfalls for Future Research." European Journal of Education 18.2 (1983): 139-150.

In this article Smith offered suggestions for research on academic travel abroad. He proposed measuring the educational, professional, cultural, and linguistic impact of study abroad and provided lists of questions that should be considered in evaluating each impact. He also advised future researchers to review all existing literature, to address the problem of small sample size, and to employ reliable research instruments.

Klineberg, Otto. "Stressful Experiences of Foreign Students at Various Stages of Sojourn: Counseling and Policy Implications." Uprooting and Development: Dilemmas of Coping with Modernization. Ed. George V. Coelho and Paul I. Ahmed. New York: Plenum Press, 1980. 271-293.

Klineberg presented a chronological commentary on the experience of academic travel abroad from selection of students to the return home. He described an interesting research finding called the U-curve (Lesser and Peter 1957). This was a pattern of reactions that many students abroad experience. Upon arrival students were enthused. Enthusiasm was followed by a period of depression. Students then learned to solve their problems and began to enjoy the experience again. The author stressed that this is merely a pattern, and that great variation existed among individuals.

Marion, Paul B. "Relationships of Student Characteristics and Experiences with Attitude Changes in a Program of Study Abroad." Journal of College Student Personnel 21.1 (January 1980): 58-64.

In this study Marion considered the relationship between certain characteristics and attitude change in academic travel abroad. Ninety University of Colorado undergraduates completed questionnaires and attitude scales. The author discussed several implications of the results of this study. The most "social" students prior to study abroad became most positive toward host families or countries. Those who participated in homestay became more conservative and positive toward the United States. It was the hope of this author that all implications of this research could be helpful in selecting students and in developing programs for academic travel abroad.

Abrams, Irwin. "The Impact of Antioch Education through Experience Abroad." Alternative Higher Education 3 (1979): 176-187.

Abrams considered questionnaire data from a sample of Antioch graduates who had participated in Antioch Education Abroad (AEA) in the 1960's and from a control group of Antioch graduates who had not experienced AEA. The author briefly described AEA as including home-stay, work, and study in the foreign culture. He found that AEA graduates traveled abroad more, lived abroad more, and were more aware of current international affairs. The students with the highest level of personal satisfaction were those who had participated in several aspects of the culture. Abrams concluded that the greater immersion a program provides, the greater the impact will be on attitudes and on behavior.

Hensley, T. R. and Deborah K. Sell. "A Study Abroad Program: An Examination of Impacts on Student Attitudes." Teaching Political Science 6 (July 1979): 387-411.

The authors examined the impact of academic travel abroad in four specific areas: 1.) the attitude of worldmindedness 2.) support for the United Nations 3.) self-esteem and 4.) tolerance of ambiguity. The sample for this study was a group of fifty-two students at Kent State University who participated in the Geneva Semester Abroad. The control group was a group of seventeen enrolled at Kent State in a class on international organization. The results were reported in table form both at the aggregate level and as regression coefficients. The results of this study showed the impact of academic travel abroad was substantial in only one area. Students tended to increase their level of self-esteem.

Carsello, Carmen and James Creaser. "How College Students Change during Study Abroad." College Student Journal 10.3 (1976): 276-278.

Carsello spent a sabbatical leave touring Europe and interviewing students involved in academic travel abroad. He administered a questionnaire to 209 of these students designed to indicate changes as a result of the study abroad program. The results were presented in table form. An increased interest in travel, in the arts, in foreign language, in history, and relating to strangers were the most frequently noted positive changes. Changes in study habits, the ability to concentrate, physical health, and reading newspapers and periodicals were the most common negative changes.

James, Newton E. "Students Abroad: Expectations versus Reality." Liberal Education 62 (December 1976): 599-607.

James presented an evaluation of academic travel abroad using questionnaire and interview data from a random sample of fifty-two university students. Questionnaires were administered as a personality test prior to study abroad. Interviews were conducted in Europe during study abroad. They were summarized and given to each participant for comment immediately and again one year later. The author provided several excerpts from interviews to illustrate changes in student attitude. He concluded that the most notable changes occurred in the areas of self-confidence and personal relationships.

Nash, Dennison. "Personal Consequences of a Year of Study Abroad." Journal of Higher Education 47 (March 1976): 191-203.

Nash used questionnaire data to measure the impact of the University of Connecticut Junior Year Abroad. The experimental group numbered forty-one, while the control group of juniors in upper-level French classes numbered thirty-two. The author used a t-test to compute differences. Nash's study showed that academic travel abroad tended to increase personal autonomy, decreased alienation, increased the preference to speak French and to eat French food, and increased interest in international affairs. This study did not support the claims that academic travel abroad produces a more positive attitude toward the host country, that it leads to increased tolerance or flexibility, or that it increases self-esteem.

Hull, W. Frank and Walter H. Lemke. "The Assessment of Off-Campus Higher Education." International Review of Education 21 (1975): 195-206.

Hull and Lemke reviewed the state of research citing the studies of Leonard (1959), Kafka (1968), Smith (1970), and Gough and McCormack (1967) as research that had employed existing instruments. They noted the research of Pace (1959) and Spier (1968) as examples of studies that had designed new instruments to measure change during academic travel abroad. The authors divided their examination of the research in this way to point out that instrumentation is the major weakness of all studies that attempt to measure attitude change.

Salter, Charles A. and Allan I. Teger. "Change in Attitudes Toward Other Nations as a Function of the Type of International Contact." Sociometry 38.2 (1975): 213-222.

Salter and Teger conducted a study on the attitudes of American tourists in Europe. They compared a travel group in Europe, a work group in Europe, and two control groups in the United States. A questionnaire was administered prior to departure, at the end of the European visit, and nine weeks after return to the United States. The major conclusion of this study was that attitude change was related to the nature of contacts made and to the personal enjoyment of participants. The extent to which the experience was negative or positive determined the attitude change.

Bicknese, Gunther. "Study Abroad Part I: A Comparative Test of Attitudes and Opinions." Foreign Language Annals 7 (1974): 325-336.

Bicknese stressed the pressing need for research on the effects of academic travel abroad. He considered this research necessary in order to develop a standard evaluation of programs and saw little progress in this area in American institutions. The author proposed his method of research as only one possible model for future studies. Bicknese reported the results of a Likert-type questionnaire designed to measure psychological impact of the junior year abroad. He provided several sample questions with statistical analysis of the responses which indicated changes in attitude or in behavior. Attitudes toward the host country changed most significantly from undecided prior to the academic travel abroad to positive after the study abroad program.

Bicknese, Gunther. "Study Abroad Part II: As the Students See It: The Junior Year Reassessed." Foreign Language Annals 7 (1974): 337-345.

In this article Bickense reported the results of a more subjective questionnaire administered to the same fifty-nine students during the same time period (1963-1966) in the Millersville Junior Year in Marnburg. Data from this study indicated that compliance with any target-language-only rule should be voluntary. It also suggested that the greatest benefits of academic travel abroad came in the second semester of study.

CHOOSING AN EXISITNG PROGRAM

Specific Programs

*American Exchange Abroad
618 Cameron St.
Alexanderia, Virginia 2214
(703) 683-4483
Contact: Gisela Kluge Miller, Director

Year Established: 1982

Nature of program: Short-term homestay and classroom exhange

*Academic Travel Abroad, Inc.
3210 Grace Street, N.W.
Washington, D.c. 20007
(202) 333-3355
Contact: Ann Waigand, Director

Year Established: 1950

Nature of program: Short-term homestay and travel/study

*Adventures in Real Communication, Inc
4162 Giles Road
Chagrin Falls, Ohio 44022
(216) 247-4214
Contact: Beverly Wattenmaker, President

Year Established: 1984

Nature of program: Short-term homestay and long-term senior project

*AFS International Intercultural Programs
313 East 43rd Street
New York, New York 10017
(212) 949-4242
Contact: Rahla Hall, Vice President for the United States
Gwendolyn L. Stewart, Field Assistant for Indiana

Year Established: 1947

Nature of program: Short-term homestay and travel/study, long-term home residence

*American Council for International Studies
19 Bay State Road
Boston, Massachusetts 02215
(617) 236-2051
Contact: Peter Jones, Vice President

Year Established: 1978

Nature of program: Short-term travel/study

*American Heritage Association
P. O. Box 425
Lake Oswego, Oregon 97043
(503) 635-3703
Contact: Kellie E. Lord, Program Services

Year Established: 1957

Nature of program: Short-term homestay, travel/study, and a language and culture camp

*American Institute for Foreign Study
102 Greenwich Avenue
Greenwich, Connecticut 06830
(203) 869-9090
(800) 243-4567
Contact: Tom Jones, Senior Vice President

Year Established: 1964

Nature of program: Short-term homestay, travel/study, and long-term home residence

American Leadership Groups
Airport Drive
Worcester, Massachusetts 01602
(617) 757-6369
(800) 824-4224
Contact: Dr. Gilbert Scott Markle, Executive Director

Year Established: 1965

Nature of program: Short-term travel/study

*Educational Foundation for Foreign Study
1528 Chapala Street
Santa Barbara, California 93101
(805) 963-0553
Contact: Fran Radford, Program Coordinator

Year Established: 1979

Nature of program: Long-term home residence

*Experiment in International Living
Kipling Road
Brattleboro, Vermont 05301
(802) 257-7751
(800) 345-2929
Contact: Charles McCormack, President

Year Established: 1932

Nature of program: Short-term homestay and travel/study

FACETS, USA, Inc.
989 Sixth Avenue
New York, New York 10018
(212) 475-4343
Contact: Ann Cooper, Director

Year Established: 1971

Nature of program: Short-term homestay and travel/study

*International Christian Youth Exchange
134 West 26th Street
New York, New York 10001
(212) 206-7307
Contact: Edwin H. Gragert, Executive Director

Year Established: 1948

Nature of program: Long-term homestay

*International Travel Study, Inc.
4200 Fourth Street North, Suite 1
St. Petersburg, Florida 33703
(813) 525-2096
Contact: Barbara Hyland, President

Year Established: 1977

Nature of program: Short-term homestay and travel/study

*National Registration Center for Study Abroad
823 North Second Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53203
(414) 278-0631
Contact: Michael Wittig, Director

Year Established: 1980

Nature of program: Short-term homestay and travel/study

*People to People High School Student Ambassador Program
110 Ferrall Street
Spokane, Washington 99202
(509) 534-0430
Contact: Emanuele F. Portolese, Director

Year Established: 1963

Nature of program: Short-term homestay and travel/study

School Year Abroad
Phillips Academy
Andover, Massachusetts 01810
(617) 475-1119
Contact: Harrison F. McCann, Executive Director

Year Established: 1964

Nature of program: Long-term home residence

*Youth for Understanding
3501 Newark Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20016
(202) 966-6800
Contact: William Woessner, President

Year Established: 1951

Nature of program: Short-term and long-term home residence

Reference Works

Council on Standards for International Educational Travel. Advisory List of International Educational Travel and Exchange Programs, 1986-87. Reston, Virginia, 1986.

The Council on Standards for International Educational Travel was founded by a group of sponsors who saw the need for some type of evaluation and monitoring of academic travel and exchange programs. This monograph explained the formation, operation, and standards of the council. It then listed the programs in compliance with its standards for the academic year of 1986-87. The council provided the full name, address, telephone number, date established, countries served, number of participants in 1985-86, number of staffed offices, and a detailed description of each program.

Cohen, Marjorie Adoff. Work, Study, Travel Abroad: The Whole World Handbook. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985.

This author presented an overview of work, study, and travel abroad country by country. Cohen offered information on practical considerations such as financing, transportation, and accommodations. She recommended several other publications on academic travel abroad and provided the information necessary to obtain them. The author presented a list of academic travel abroad programs for high school students with complete addresses.

Hoopes, David, ed., and Kathleen R. Hoopes, assistant ed. Global Guide to International Education. New York: Facts on File Publications, 1984.

This reference book provided names, addresses, and descriptions of organizations involved in many aspects of international education. The editors examined world issues, teaching resources, foreign language learning, research centers, grants, awards and fellowships, exchange organizations, and academic travel abroad organizations.

Garraty, John A., Lily von Klemperer, and Cyril J. N. Taylor. The New Guide to Study Abroad. New York: Harper and Row, 1981.

This book briefly discussed the benefits of study abroad. It provided information on the financing of academic travel abroad. It offered suggestions for intellectual and practical preparation. The authors outlined available programs for teachers, college and graduate students, and secondary school students and provided addresses of these programs. Most were through foreign institutions; some were nonprofit international corporations. Included was an appendix listing agencies and organizations promoting foreign study and travel.

DEVELOPING A NEW PROGRAM

Trujillo, Lorenzo A. and others. Student Travel: Policies - Regulations - Exhibits. Jefferson County Public Schools. Lakewood, Colorado, 1984. ED 245 531.

This document offered an example of a program developed by the Jefferson County (Colorado) Public Schools. It clearly stated the liability of sponsors and administrators in the academic travel abroad program. It also addressed the issues of an approval policy, conflict in interest for sponsors, criteria for student and sponsor selection, the collection of funds, and the evaluation of the student, sponsor, and program. The specific forms used for approval, checklists, parent release agreement, acknowledgement of responsibilities, teacher permission, student interview, and student evaluation were included.

Przeklasa, Anthony, John Colombe, and John T. Rutkowski. "An Alternative to the classroom: Travel for Credit." Clearing House 52 (October 1978): 76-77.

This was a description of the academic travel abroad program developed by the Argos Community High School in Summit, Illinois. The program has been approved by the North Central Association of Secondary Schools, the Office of Regional Superintendent of Schools, and the Illinois Office of Education. The authors provided a rationale for academic travel abroad, the organization and requirements of their program, and suggestions for anyone developing such a program. Requirements of the Argos program included a preliminary research project, a journal, a scrapbook, and reports on historical sites, the people, and the value of the travel experience.

Davis, Dorothy. "Study Abroad: A Case Study and Some Implications." International Journal of University Adult Education 17 (April 1978): 14-23.

Davis examined an academic travel abroad program sponsored by a North American university at the Australian National University. Since the existing university structure did not successfully accommodate the nine-week study of the Americans, the Australian National University developed a new program through the Centre for Continuing Education. She described in some detail this 1975 program. Although the new program was more successful, problems remained. American students were not properly screened and did not have sufficient preliminary study. The nine-week course was also considered to be too short a duration.

CONSIDERING SPECIFIC SPONSOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Wicks, Raymond E. "NCSS Travel Study Guidelines." Social Education 50.1 (January 1986): 35-36.

Wicks presented a set of guidelines designed to aid students and sponsors in the selection of academic travel abroad programs. He urged the reader to conduct a thorough review of the program's literature and a discussion with program organizers and past participants. The guidelines provided a rating scale in the following areas: sponsor and features, goals, selection of participants, activities, concluding the excursion, and utilizing the participants.

Cahn, Barbara and Mindy Naiman, ed. Basic Facts on Foreign Study. Institute of International Education, New York, 1985.

This thirty-page pamphlet offered information on planning study abroad, secondary school programs, finances, housing, transportation, medical insurance, passports, visas, and vaccinations. It also provided a practical bibliography of IIE, CIEE, and NAFSA publications, as well as general reference works.

Castallo, Richard. "With a Bit of Planning, You Can Protect Student Travelers and Your Board." American School Board Journal 172.12 (December 1985): 45.

In this article the author related his experience as a school administrator planning an academic travel program to Spain. He strongly advised administrators to check insurance policies, as few provide coverage outside North America. He also stressed the legal responsibility of school boards in academic travel programs. Castallo suggested that boards use attorneys to protect themselves and take action to formally sanction the academic travel.

Swinger, Alice K. Planning for Study Abroad: Fastback Series 228. Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, Bloomington, Indiana, 1985.

Swinger's fastback examined several aspects of academic travel abroad that would be useful to the student and sponsor. She prefaced her work with a description of the benefits of such a program and a discussion of setting personal goals. She explained financing, obtaining official documents, acquiring background, and coping with daily life abroad. Swinger concluded with suggestions for the final weeks abroad and preparation for return.

Lulat, Y. "International Students and Study-Abroad Programs: A Select Bibliography." Comparative Education 28.2 (May 1984): 299-339.

This was a bibliography of articles and monographs concerning international students and academic travel abroad programs. Of particular interest to the potential high school sponsor were the sections entitled "Reference - Bibliographies", "Health", "Adaptation Problems", and "International and Educational Exchange and Study-Abroad Programs".

"Guidelines for Overseas Travel by Student Ensembles." Music Educator's Journal 70.2 (October 1983): 55-56.

This article contained a checklist of fourteen organizational considerations for any academic travel abroad sponsor who chooses to use a local travel agency to arrange a program. These considerations included objectives, planning, cost, accommodations, services, flexibility, bonding, chartering, community understanding and support, and references from similar groups who had used the agency.

Barnes, Leslie R. "Cross-Cultural Exchange: How Students Can Frustrate the Aims of Study Abroad Programs." International Review of Education 28 (1982): 373-376.

This article cautioned sponsors and administrators of academic travel abroad about the tendency to allow students themselves to determine program objectives or academic requirements. Barnes examined an individual program where the lack of clear objectives and requirements led to students demanding specially-designed courses. This did not provide a true cultural experience for the students, but became a mere transplant of the course of study they would have followed in the United States.

Locke, Susan A. and Fred M. Feinsod. "Psychological Preparation for Young Adults Traveling Abroad." Adolescence 17.68 (Winter 1982): 815-819.

Sponsors of academic travel abroad should be aware of the phenomenon of culture shock. Locke and Feinsod described the most common symptoms of culture shock and the U-curve reaction pattern generally associated with it. They offered suggestions for psychological screening of students and for education to help minimize the anxiety of culture shock. They also stated that after any long-term program of study abroad, sponsors should be aware of the possibility of re-entry culture shock and should try to prepare students for this.

American Association of Colligiate Registrars and Admissions Officers and National Association for Foreign Student Affairs. Study Abroad Programs: An Evaluation Guide. Washington D. C., 1979. ED227 783.

This document provided worksheets with a total of eighty-nine questions for sponsors and administrators to use in evaluating academic travel abroad programs. These worksheets referred to four major areas of evaluation: 1.) questions to be applied to printed material 2.) questions to be answered by program administrators 3.) questions to be answered by program alumni and 4.) questions to be answered by evaluations during an on-site review.

National Association for Foreign Student Affairs. Study Abroad: Handbook for Advisors and Administrators. Guideline Series 10. Washington D. C., 1979. ED 227 784.

This document presented guidelines for preparing students for academic travel abroad. Areas considered included studying culture and language, obtaining travel documents, financing, and deciding what to take. It also offered an outline of the characteristics of a good program and discussed legal implications important to the sponsor. This handbook included a bibliography and a list of acronyms commonly used to discuss academic travel abroad.

SUMMARY

There has been much research in the area of academic travel abroad, but few solid conclusive findings. Most researchers prefaced their studies with some comment on the lack of a reliable research base concerning the impact of academic travel abroad. Hull and Lemke cited instrumentation as a major weakness. They reviewed several specific studies in terms of the type of instrumentation used. Sell provided a comprehensive review of research to date and suggested the use of subgroup analysis and the measurement of behavioral change, as well as attitude change in future studies.

Burn reported the characteristics of students participating in academic travel abroad. They were more independent, ambitious, and more demanding of themselves and of others than students in the control group.

Most researchers used a "before" and "after" assessment of student attitude. Abrams contended that, after study abroad, students subsequently traveled and lived abroad more than students who had not participated in the academic travel abroad program. They were also more world-minded. Carsello stated that students who studied abroad became more interested in travel, foreign language, the arts, and history.

Bicknese stressed that the greatest benefits of academic travel abroad seemed to be realized only in the second semester of study. He therefore advocated a long-term program. This researcher also related his experience in imposing the target-language-only rule. This rule was more effective when followed voluntarily by students and not stated in the form of a written oath. Bicknese and Marion both noted a favorable

change in attitude toward the host country. Marion went on to state that students became more worldminded. They showed increased tolerance and self-esteem.

The studies of Klineberg and Locke referred to the U-curve reaction of students participating in study abroad programs. This involved a period of enthusiasm and contentment upon arrival followed by disillusionment or depression. At the conclusion of the study abroad period or after their return home, students rebounded and became enthusiastic about the experience once again.

One finding that appeared uncontested was that academic travel abroad increased foreign language proficiency. This was noted in the writings of Bicknese, Nash, and Koester. In her profiles, Koester noted that a high percentage of the students involved in all types of study abroad were language majors and listed language as a major concern. Twenty-nine percent considered themselves fluent in another language as a result of formal study.

A conclusion that appeared to be most vague was that academic travel abroad increased the worldmindedness or the international curiosity, concern, and knowledge of students. Marion and Abrams reported an increase in this attitude. Burn stated that prior to academic travel abroad, candidates were more concerned about international affairs, but they were no better informed than students in the control group. The research of Nash and of Hensley and Sell concluded that academic travel abroad did not increase worldmindedness significantly. Hensley and Sell did report a significant increase in students' degree of self-esteem.

Finally, Salter and Teger asserted that the most important variable

in attitude change during academic travel abroad was the enjoyment of the program. This was described by these researchers and others who followed as a halo effect. If the overall experience of a student was positive, attitudes tended to change in a positive direction.

The present study went beyond research in an attempt to provide information and guidance for the potential sponsoring teacher of an academic travel abroad program at the high school level. A listing and description of specific programs and of general reference works that would be helpful to the novice sponsor were provided. Also included were the descriptions of three programs developed by individual schools as this is another option available to any teacher posessing the time and energy to undertake such a challenge. Jefferson County Public Schools, Argos Community High School, and Australian National Unviersity study abroad programs served as models for the development of a new program.

The final section of this study considered the more specific responsibilities and concerns of a sponsoring teacher or administrator. The bibliography of Lulat was included as a reference source. The NAFSA evaluation guide and the NCSS guidelines provided working documents to help in evaluating any program of academic travel abroad. The NAFSA handbook, as well as the works of Cahn and Swinger, presented information on a variety of practical concerns including financing, preparation of students, transporation, housing, obtaining of travel documents, and health concerns. One option not mentioned elsewhere in the study, that of employing a local travel agency, was briefly addressed by the "Guidelines for Overseas Travel by Student Ensembles".

Any potential sponsor of such a program should be aware of the

occurrence of culture shock. Locke and Feinsod stressed the need for psychological screening of students to determine their vulnerability. They also noted the importance of education. Becoming aware of this phenomenon usually lessened its severity.

Finally, Castallo touched on the important issue of legal responsibility. He urged administrators to check insurance, use attorneys, and formally approve the academic travel program.

CONCLUSIONS

There remains a pressing need for research. Much of the research cited in this study appeared to draw conflicting conclusions. "Many optimistic statements about the effects of American overseas educational programs have been made," stated Nash, "but attempts to assess these claims have produced ambiguous results" (193). One of the major causes of this ambiguity lies in the nature of this research. It has been difficult to apply objective, scientific methodology and instrumentation to the very subjective nature of attitude change (Sell, 141). Hull and Lemke underscored the very basic problem of instrumentation (201).

Another possible cause of the ambiguity of this research may be that researchers have not agreed on exactly what needs to be measured. It has never been determined which variables are important in the study abroad experience (Sell, 141).

Finally, one must realize that the populations studied were immensely varied in composition. Students who embarked on the academic travel abroad experience carried with them their own personalities, values, and attitudes which all differed before the experience. How could change or reaction be measured if personality differences were not considered prior to the experience? Sell suggested the use of subgroup analysis to help make attitude measurement more accurate in this aspect (Sell, 142).

However, there were areas of general agreement in the research. There seemed to be no opposition to the claim that academic travel abroad increased language proficiency (Nash, 192). This was supported in the

studies of Bicknese, Nash, and Koester. Thus, when researchers measured the increase in academic performance of students, there seemed to be no ambiguity.

It was in the measurement of attitude change that findings appeared vague and contradictory. The studies of Sell and Hensley, of James, and of Marion all reported that students possessed increased self-esteem after the program of academic travel abroad. The only research that did not support this hypothesis was that of Nash. Nash addressed this contradiction in his summary saying, "More support might have been forthcoming if the overseas group had been made up of fewer students who had left boy and girl friends at home. The evidence indicates that it was those students who suffered the greatest decline in self-esteem and that they were mainly responsible for the group trend against the hypothesis" (200). Thus, the research does conclude that academic travel abroad increased students' level of self-esteem.

As noted in the summary, the most contradictory research results were found in the measurement of the change in worldmindedness. The ambiguity of research results in this area is important since this is one of the most frequent justifications offered by supporters of academic travel abroad. The urgent need for further research and conclusive findings in the measurement of this variable remains imperative.

The objective of the present study was not only to review the research but also to provide a practical working document for the potential sponsoring teacher of academic travel abroad. Teachers receive much publicity and propaganda from commercial and nonprofit organizations advocating the

worth of their individual program. How can the teacher who wishes to participate in such a program of study with high school students make an intelligent choice? It is hoped that the review of existing programs, the models of school-developed programs, and the special concerns reviewed in the final section of this study will provide a wealth of information and an intelligent departure point.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommended for an intelligent, informed selection of an academic travel abroad program:

1) Teachers must become familiar with the research concerning academic travel abroad.

2) Teachers must carefully examine program objectives, the nature of the program, participant screening and preparation, and program reputability.

3) Teachers must also consider such practical matters as obtaining travel documents, medical insurance, transportation, housing, and financing.

4) Teachers must be aware of the possibility of conflict of interest in recruiting students.

5) Teachers must work in close conjunction with the community and the school board.

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